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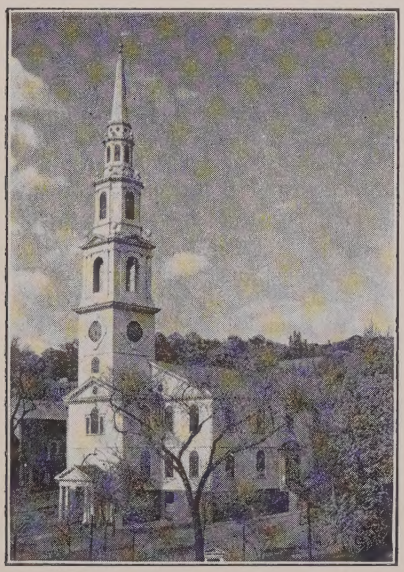
# The First Baptist Church

CONSTITUTED A. D. 1638

## Providence, R. I.



MEETING HOUSE ERECTED A. D. 1775

# HISTORICAL STATEMENT

BY REV. HENRY M. KING, D.D.

THIS CHURCH is the oldest church of any denomination in the State and the oldest Baptist Church in America. It was founded as early as 1638 by Roger Williams and his companions, and has maintained a continuous existence from that time. The first settlers under the leadership of Roger Williams, their minister, came from Salem, from which place he had been banished two years before. Others had joined them from Boston, and here on land purchased by them from the Indians they founded a colony in which they themselves might enjoy, and also offer to all men "distressed of conscience", the priceless boon of soul-liberty. It was the first time in the history of the world that a State had been founded with civil and religious liberty for its corner stone.

During the year 1637-38 their new religious convictions were sufficiently matured to demand organized expression in church-fellowship. They were devout Christians, but had broken away from the old ecclesiastical order, as many Christians in England were doing about that time, and here in the wilderness beyond hostile jurisdiction and the fear of persecution, they established a new order which they had come to believe was in harmony with the teachings of the New Testament, viz., immersion on profession of personal faith in Christ.

In the absence of any scripturally baptized person in this new world, Ezekiel Holliman, one of their number, was deputed to baptize Roger Williams, and then he in turn baptized Mr. Holliman and "some ten more." These twelve or more persons constituted the Church. We learn the names of the most of them from the records of the Puritan Church in Salem, which state that certain persons were excluded from its fellowship for having been rebaptized. Roger Williams and his wife, Mary, were among the number. Mr. Williams was the first pastor of the little church. They adopted no articles of faith, and the Church has remained to this day without formal creed or covenant.

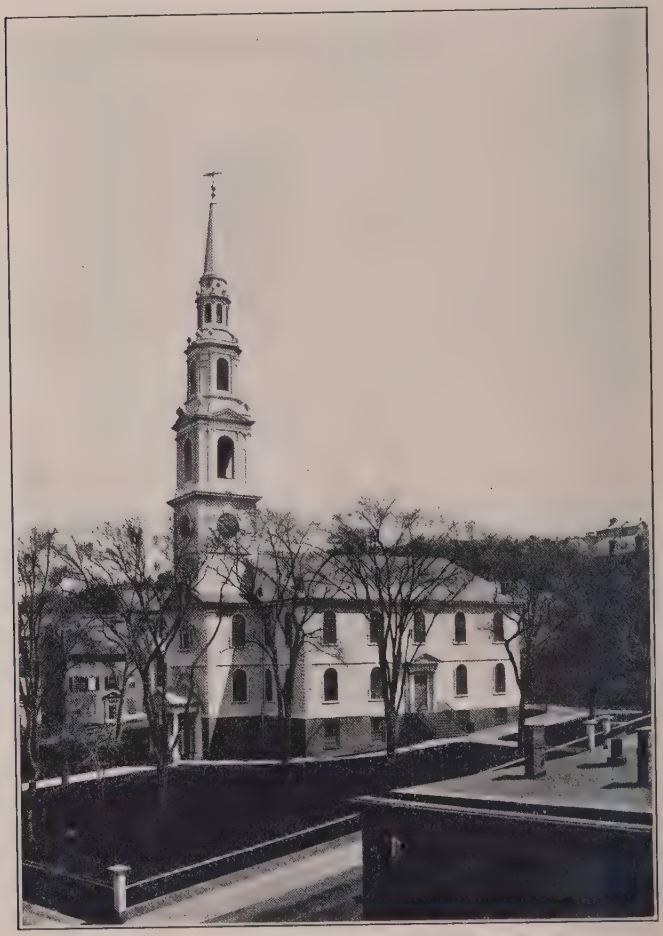
In a few months Roger Williams withdrew from the Church, having been led to believe that owing to the corruption in Christendom, the rites of the Church had become invalid, and that there was no proper administrator and no proper church; but he cherished to the end of his life his faith in the scripturalness of the distinctive views and practices of the Church which he planted. This is evident from his writings. He became a "Seeker," continuing to live in Providence or vicinity, and laboring for the enlightenment and conversion of the Indians, whose confidence he had won when living at Plymouth, and always retained. His labors antedated those of John Eliot, the famous "Apostle to the Indians," and were no less successful. He also labored watchfully and self-denyingly for the peace, the prosperity and the perpetuity of the State which he was instrumental in founding. In its interests he paid two visits to the mother country at his own charges. He died in 1683, and "was buried with all the solemnity the colony was able to show."

After Roger Williams' withdrawal from the Church there were four ministers who seem to have held the pastoral office conjointly, constituting a plurality of elders, as was sometimes the case, viz. Chad Brown, Thomas Olney, William Wickenden and Gregory Dexter. It is impossible to determine definitely their terms of service. They were all men of strong characters, and competent leaders of the Church, which was still small. They served the Church conscientiously without compensation, giving to its spiritual oversight such time and strength as their secular occupations permitted. They all, like Williams, have left a numerous posterity.

For sixty years this Church had no house of worship, and held its services in the homes of the members or under the trees. Its first house of worship was built in 1700 by Rev. Pardon Tillinghast, the sixth pastor, and deeded to the Church in 1711. It stood at the corner of North Main street and Smith street. This gave place to a larger one, built on the same spot in 1726, which was forty feet square.

The present house is located on an acre-and-a-quarter tract of land about one-eighth of a mile south of the site of the two former buildings. It was begun in 1774, and dedicated in May, 1775, midway between the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill. Brown University, or Rhode Island College, as it was called until 1804, had moved from Warren, R. I., where it was founded in 1764, to Providence in 1771, and in the preamble setting forth the project for the new building there was the explicit statement that the Meeting House would be "For the Publick Worship of Almighty God, and also for holding Commencement in." For its religious services the church had proposed a building sixty feet square, and had secured pledges for its estimated cost of £5000, but for this double use an increase to eighty feet was decided upon, to cost £2000 more. This additional sum was raised, as was the common method in the case of all large undertakings of that time,—but the first and only instance in the history of this church,—by an officially authorized lottery. The present edifice has a seating capacity of 800 on the main floor and 600 in the gallery, still the largest Protestant auditorium in the state. The spire, 185 feet high, is a marvel of beauty, and is a close copy of one of the many proposed but unused designs of a steeple for St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, in London, but the body of the building is essentially that of Marybone Chapel, both being of the Sir Christopher Wren type, and delineated by James Gibbs, a pupil of that celebrated church builder, in his "Book of Architecture." Joseph Brown, one of the four famous brothers, using this book as a guide, made the working drawings, while a James Sumner, of Boston, served as master-workman.

The beautiful crystal chandelier was brought over from England in 1792, being a gift by Hope Brown in memory of her father, Nicholas Brown, 1st, and was lighted for the first time on the occasion of her marriage to Thomas Poynton Ives. Until 1884 it burned candles, but at that time it was fitted for gas, then in 1914 for electric lights. In 1832 the original square pews were removed, and the present ones substituted. The lofty pulpit and its sounding board were also taken down, and the pulpit that served from then until 1875 is now in parts stored in the meeting house attic. The present platform and communion furniture, as well



THE
MEETING HOUSE
OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
IN PROVIDENCE

# A History of the Fabric

*by*

NORMAN M. ISHAM
F. A. I. A.

*Issued by The Charitable Baptist Society on the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Dedication of the House, May Twenty-eighth Seventeen Hundred and Seventy-Five*

PROVIDENCE MAY 28, MDCCCCXXV

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Providence

*To*

JOSEPH BROWN *and* JAMES SUMNER

*and the others*

THE CRAFTSMEN

*who with them wrought the House*

*and to*

JAMES GIBBS

*who designed the*

*Steeple*

16763

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# PREFACE

It is the purpose of this book to give a brief and not too technical history of the fabric of the Meeting House of the First Baptist Church. No account of it as a whole exists, and it has never been described from an architectural point of view. Such historical accounts as are accessible are combined with the ecclesiastical history of the Church or with the annals of the College. It is wise, then, on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the great building, to gather what there is in the records with what may reasonably be inferred from them, what there may be in the traditions of the congregation and of the city and what is to be learned from the house itself, and to combine these sources into one narrative which shall trace the beginnings of the enterprise, the design, the construction and the changes which have brought the fabric to what we now admire.

To those friends of the old Meeting House who have so kindly helped them in this task the thanks of the committee on the Anniversary and of the author are gratefully rendered; to the Rhode Island Historical Society for the use of its old views of the building; to the Society's president, Mr. Howard W. Preston, for advice and help, especially on the purchase of the land; to the Providence Athenaeum for permission to copy the engravings in its old Gibbs; to Mr. Frank C. Angell, for his aid in the restoration of the old pulpit; to the senior architectural students of the Rhode Island School of Design for help in measurements and drawings; to Prof. Watson who has long studied the fabric; and, especially, to Mr. John Nicholas Brown, by whose courtesy are printed for the first time the documents—well-nigh priceless in a research where the destruction of the early accounts has added so much to the difficulty of the problem,—which are gathered in the appendices. Among these is an estimate of the cost of the building and of the resources available for meeting the charges, a paper which alone would justify the brief history here offered.

# THE MEETING HOUSE
*of the*
# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
*in Providence*

## I

## THE UNDERTAKING

In 1774 the congregation of the First Baptist Church had outgrown its meeting house. The old building, which stood on what is now the corner of North Main and Smith Streets, was small and it was old fashioned, for Howland, who must have known it, says it was about forty feet square and that it had only benches for seats.[1] The Elder Ballou Meeting House, in Cumberland, the only contemporary building of its kind in Rhode Island which is comparatively unchanged, will reward the visitor who studies its curious benches and primitive galleries by giving him a nearly perfect picture of the interior of this older house of worship of the Providence Baptists.[2]

The authorities of the church determined, therefore, on a new building. To accomplish this, as well as to hold land and to look after the temporal affairs of the church they formed the Charitable Baptist Society the members of which agreed: "that we will all heartily unite, as one man, . . . particularly to attend to and revive the affair of building a meeting-house, for the publick worship of Almighty God, and also for holding Commencement in."[3]

They were not long in carrying their resolve into effect. In fact, the swiftness with which they moved is astounding. They bought land, they sent Joseph Brown and Jonathan Hammon

1. Stone, *Life of John Howland*, p. 29.
2. In the estimate of the cost of the new meeting house, Appendix B, the sum of £3 was allowed for "work in takg seets from old meeting house and putg in new" though there is nothing to show that this was done.
3. Char. Bapt. Soc. MS. Records, p. 1 under date of Feb. 11, 1774.

to Boston "to view the different churches and meeting-houses there, and to make a memorandum of their several dimensions and forms of architecture," and, in the beginning of March 1774, they voted that "Joseph Brown, Jonathan Hammond and Comfort Wheaton be a Committee to make a Draught of a House 90 by 70 feet together with a Tower and Steeple and make an Invoice of the Timber and other material, and ascertain the price of the same, and that they make Report of the same to the Society at their next meeting."[1] This is the documentary evidence for the tradition, constant and uniform in the town, that Joseph Brown was the architect of the meeting house. The vote leaves so little time for the study of a plan that it seems certain that a scheme had already been pretty well thought out and decided upon, and that a working plan of this was to be made from which the lists of quantities, with the prices for them, could be determined.

A little later one man, Mr. John Brown, was appointed "the Committee man for carrying on the building" and eleven others were appointed to advise and assist him, with meetings every Monday evening. The first of these was at John Brown's, May 9, 1774.[2]

The land first purchased ran south from the present Thomas Street eighty feet along what is now North Main, and back "about three hundred" to Benefit. The vote asking Mr. William Russell to buy this land for the

2. THE PURCHASES OF LAND

1. C. B. Soc. MS. Records, p. 2.

2. See Appendix E. where the list is given from an original MS. memorandum.

Society was passed February 14, 1774. John Angell's deed to Russell[1] is dated February 15th, of that year.

This first lot, John Angell's orchard, was deeded to the Charitable Baptist Society by William Russell, July 8, 1774.[2]

At the meeting, early in March, when the plan was ordered, it was voted to buy land from Amaziah Waterman who, on April 22, 1774,[3] deeded to John Jenckes, Nicholas Brown and others, an irregular lot on the south of the original purchase. This is marked II in figure 2.

Mr. Jenckes and the others deeded this lot to the Society, July 28, 1774.[4]

This left on the corner of Waterman and North Main Streets, to use the present names, a lot which was held by the Watermans until, on April 8, 1857,[5] William H. Waterman and others conveyed it to the Society. This is III in figure 2.

From this original estate land has been taken, at different times, to widen Benefit, Waterman and North Main Streets, as is roughly indicated, in figure 2, by the dotted lines which give approximately the present lines of the land.

## II

## THE DESIGN

Let us now consider the membership and the work of the committee appointed to "make a Draught of a House." Joseph Brown who had lately become a member of the church, was undoubtedly the chairman, as he is named first. One of the famous "four brothers", he was not only a man of affairs but a

1. Providence Deed Book XX. p. 188. It looks as if the matter had been arranged before hand. Note the date on the List of Subscribers in Appendix C.
2. D. B. XIX., 240.
3. D. B. XX., 391.
4. D. B. XIX., 257.
5. D. B. CXLV., 296.

scholar of scientific attainment, who was not long after to hold the chair of Experimental Philosophy in Rhode Island College. That he was a man of taste and culture and that he was interested in architecture and had some knowledge of it is witnessed, aside from what he did for the meeting house, by the two books on the art which appear in his inventory.

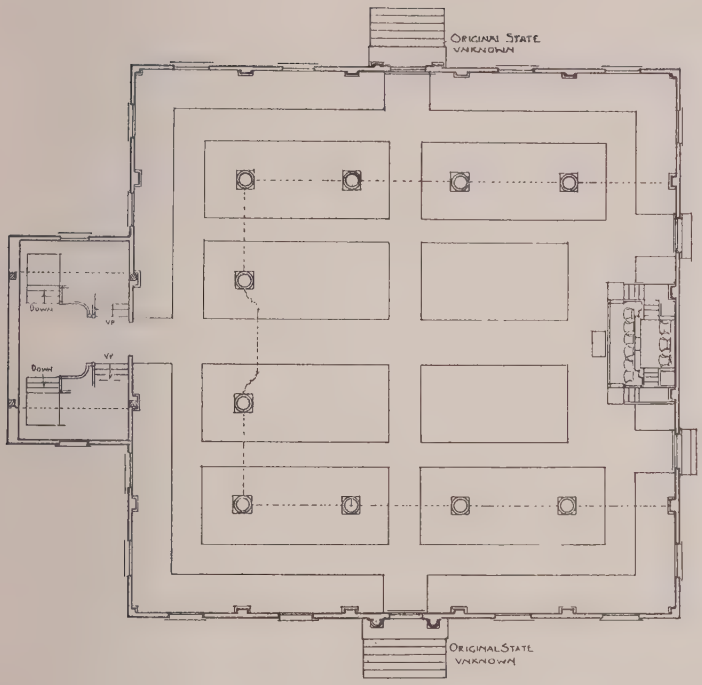
Jonathan Hammond or Hammon, as it is generally spelled, was a carpenter. He is called "joyner" in 1744 in a deed from Daniel Sheldon, and "house carpenter" in 1762.[1] He was sent to Boston, it will be remembered, with Mr. Brown and Mr. Wheaton. He had been to Cambridge, in 1770, with Joseph Brown and Zephaniah Andrews, on a similar errand, and, as Andrews was the master mason on University Hall and as an old account for that building mentions Hammon's judgment on "refuse boards",[2] it is very probable that he was the master carpenter on the College work.

Comfort Wheaton was born in 1723 and thus was about the same age as Hammon who was twenty-one or more in 1744. He is called "housewright" in a deed of 1763.[3] Both he and Hammon subscribed to the fund for building the meeting house, Hammon £12 "to be paid in Labour," Wheaton £12 "in work." Their names, with those of many other workmen, are in the list in Appendix C.

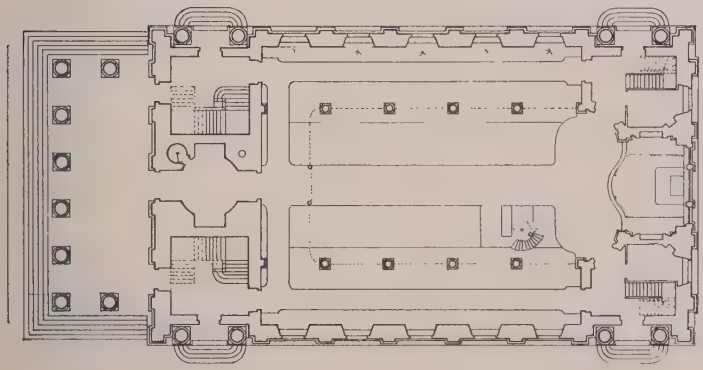
These two men, then, were put on the committee to make the invoice of timber and to give the technical and practical advice needed to embody in a "Draught," Mr. Brown's choice of a design for the Meeting House.

That choice was profoundly influenced by the churches of James Gibbs a very able architect who was practicing in England in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The meeting-houses and churches of Boston seem to have had little or no interest for the committee. Mr. Brown possessed a copy of Gibbs's "Book of Architecture", published in 1728, which contained many drawings of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, built in

1. Prov. Deed Book B-X., p. 179. D. B. XVII. 251.
2. Guild, *B. U. and Manning*, p. 154.
3. D. B. XVII., 315.




3. THE PLAN OF THE MEETING HOUSE IN 1775



4. THE PLAN OF ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS

1726, and of other churches as well. What has long been maintained by tradition to be the very copy owned by Mr. Brown and used in the design of the Meeting House is now in the possession of the Providence Athenaeum. Its history and authenticity are discussed in Appendix A.

The plan upon which the committee settled has no resemblance to that of the church of St. Martin except in its two rows of columns. It is probable that the basilican plan was taken from this church or from the simpler Marybone Chapel, but there the resemblance ceases, as will plainly appear if the two plans, that of the First Baptist in figure 3 and that of St. Martin's in figure 4, be even casually compared. In fact the plan of the Meeting House is pretty nearly a product of its own time and place.

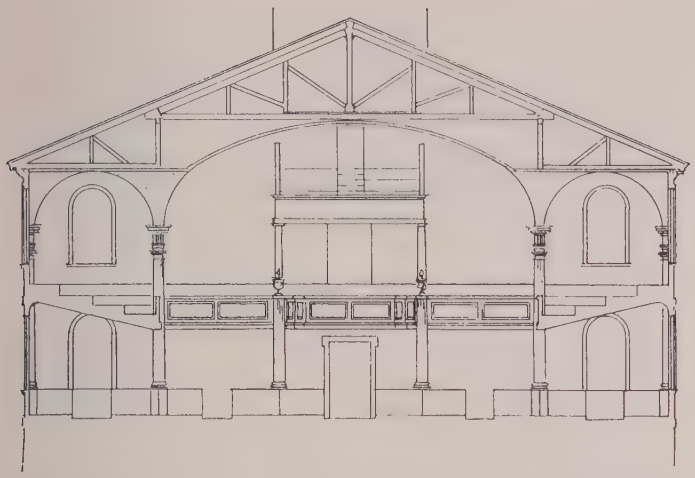
The original vote of the Society directed the committee to "make a Draught of a House 90 by 70 feet." At the next meeting this vote was "disannulled" and it was determined to make the building eighty feet square, its present size. The width of seventy feet is that of St. Martin's, but it may not have been chosen for that reason. The lot bought from Thomas Angell was ninety feet wide only and a building more than seventy feet wide could not well be placed upon it. Indeed, that width would be too great, and the principal door would perforce be in the end of the house, an arrangement repugnant to the feeling of dissenting New England and giving up the usual New England meeting-house plan with its side doors. It was probably thought by some that this narrow plan was going a little too far toward the long church, like Trinity at Newport, and away from the old broad plan of the seventeenth century.[1] This may have led to the purchase of the land on the south from Amaziah Waterman, authorized at the previous meeting, which gave more space around the meeting-house while it allowed the plan to be made wider and nearer the form dear to tradition. This reduced the plan, figure 3, to a square with a tower on one side. There were five doors, one in the tower,

1. Rev. C. A. Place, "From Meeting House to Church in New England," in *Old Time New England*, XIII, 149.

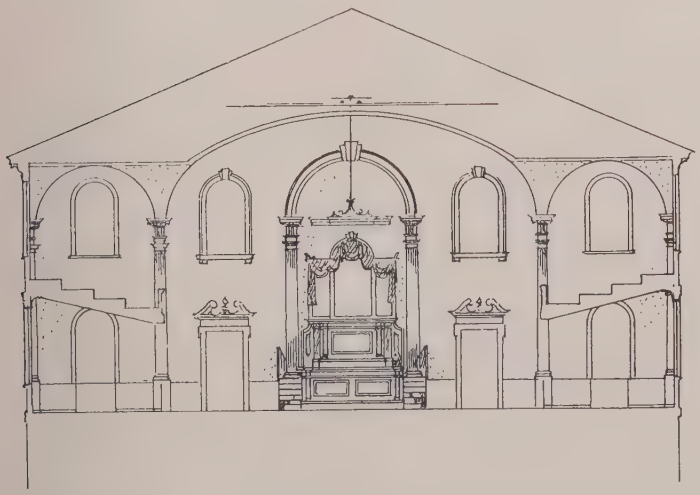
one on the north, one on the south and two on the east. St. Martin's has but one principal entrance, that through the tower, which was, generally, in New England meeting-houses, no more important than any other, if as much so. Except for the lines of columns no one could accuse our committee or Mr. Brown of copying from Gibbs.

The section, however, figure 5, shows more resemblance to that of St. Martin's. Each has a barrel vault of elliptical curve over the central space, each has a gallery on two sides and two at the west end, and each has vaults in the side gallery ceilings. This brings the west ends into a likeness to each other. The east ends, as might be expected of church and meeting-house are quite unlike. The vaulting of Gibbs' design, moreover, figure 7, was too elaborate. The main vault was coffered and had penetrations with inclined crowns over the arches of the galleries. The aisle galleries, too, were vaulted with saucer domes on pendentives, in the manner of Wren at St. Paul's. None of this was copied. In plate XXIV of Gibbs's "Book of Architecture", however, is a section of Marybone Chapel, figure 8, which must have been taken as the pattern for the vaulting of the First Baptist; for, excepting the Corinthian order of the columns, it is, almost line for line, the section of our meeting-house. The central space has the flat elliptical barrel, and the galleries have groined vaults on a square plan, with level crowns. Even the treatment of the east end can be readily translated into the Palladian window under an arch carried by two pilasters, the motive which our eastern wall once had.

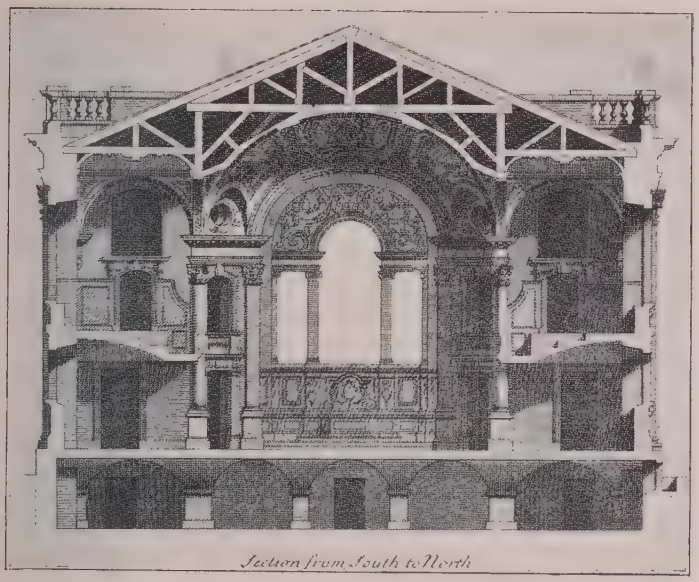
The spire, or the steeple, as the old documents always call it, was entirely due to Gibbs. When the Church of St. Martin was built the architect made four designs for the spire. One of these was selected by the vestry and was built. The other three Gibbs published in his book. They are printed side by side in plate XXX of the ancient work from which they are reproduced in figure 11. The committee—it was undoubtedly Mr. Brown's choice—fixed upon the middle design of the three. No change was made in the design as Gibbs drew



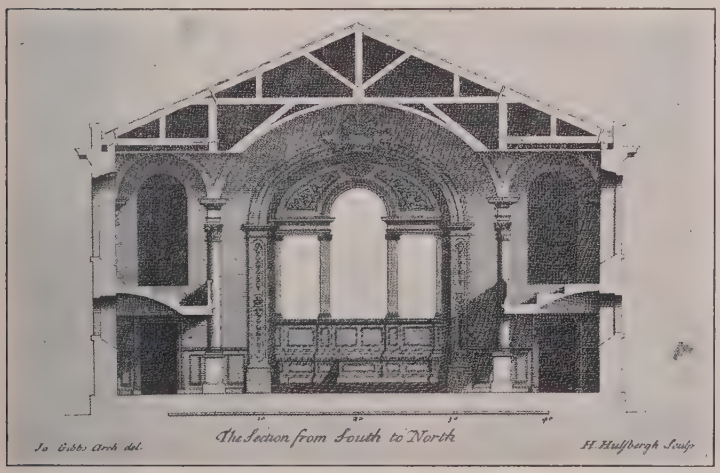
5. THE CROSS SECTION OF THE MEETING HOUSE LOOKING WEST



6. THE CROSS SECTION OF THE MEETING HOUSE LOOKING EAST




7. THE CROSS SECTION OF ST. MARTIN'S LOOKING EAST




8. THE CROSS SECTION OF MARYBONE CHAPEL LOOKING EAST

it except in the last window stage. Gibbs had made this cylindrical. In the actual steeple this stage is octagonal, probably because it was cheaper, though we can not say that Mr. Brown was not aware that he was making an improvement.

The invoice made by the committee is not extant in its original form, but the substance of it has come down to us in a document called "Cost of the Baptist Meeting House now Building". This consists of three pages of foolscap—three sheets each written on one side—endorsed in a different hand:

> "Calculation of the cost of the Meeting house made by John Jenks Jn° Brown Cahoon & Jos Brown Made Aug^t 1774"

It is practically a bill of quantities and of labor very carefully itemized and extraordinarily complete. It is of the greatest help in studying the design, for it is so nearly a specification that we can see what the designers intended as we compare it with what now exists and with the sections in Gibbs. It is printed in full in Appendix B.

The chief differences between the house as it was built and as we now see it are at the two ends. At the west there was, above the main gallery which then had no organ, a second gallery where the colored people sat. Such a gallery is shown in the section of St. Martin's in figure 7. It is carried by small columns set back from the main gallery front, which is also carried by columns which stop beneath it.

The upper gallery in the First Baptist is restored in figures 5 and 9 from this corresponding gallery in St. Martin's, from the lunettes which once lighted it through the the vault of the nave and which are still visible in the garret, and from certain statements in the estimate. This called for "small Pillows" under the gallery, for casing eight posts, "beede caseing" and allowed £20 for the whole carpenter work of this upper gallery.

There were four of these "Small Pillows to support the front [i.e. the west] Gallerys above & below," but the lower

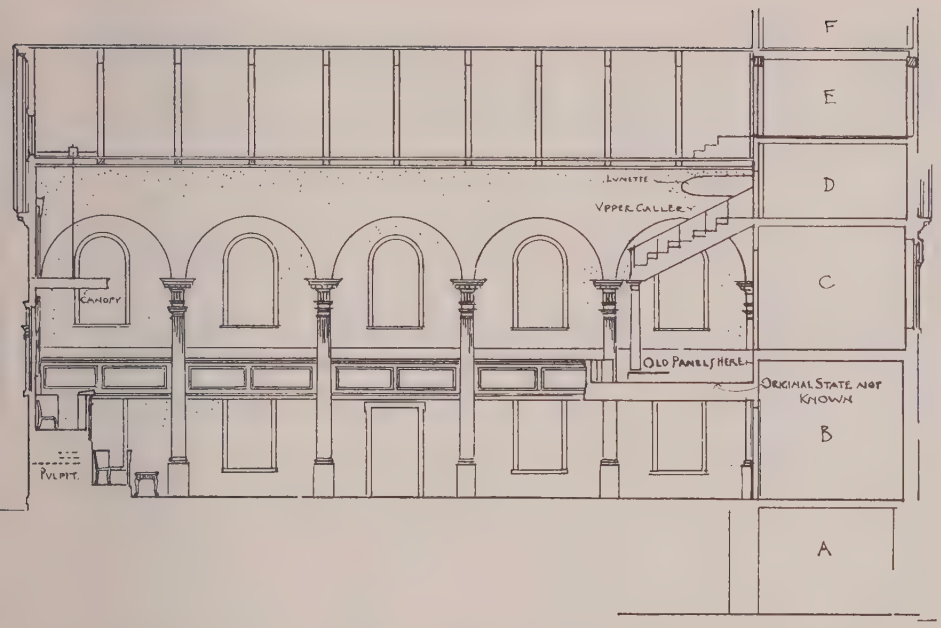
pair, under the main gallery was not used. The large columns, like those at the sides, took its place.

The treatment of the Gallery front, the "Brast work to the Gallery with Belextion pannills," follows that in St. Martin's and in the Marybone Chapel. It is like that, too, in King's Chapel, Boston. It has the drawback of cutting into the columns in an ugly manner and of having no special appearance of support. Gibbs seems to have used it deliberately, for he must have known of the expedients which Wren used to meet the problem of tall columns cut by a gallery. Perhaps Gibbs thought the less he called attention to the puzzle the better. Not all Wren's churches were of the basilican plan, that is with nave and aisles, like the First Baptist, since he varied his plans, but those that have this arrangement are provided with galleries on the two sides and at the west end. At St. Bride's, the gallery front cuts into the columns but has a pier under each end. At Christ Church, Newgate, there are piers which support the gallery and the columns rise from them. At St. James, Westminster, there are piers under the gallery and piers above it with pedestals on the gallery face, an arrangement followed at Trinity in Newport and at Christ Church, Boston.

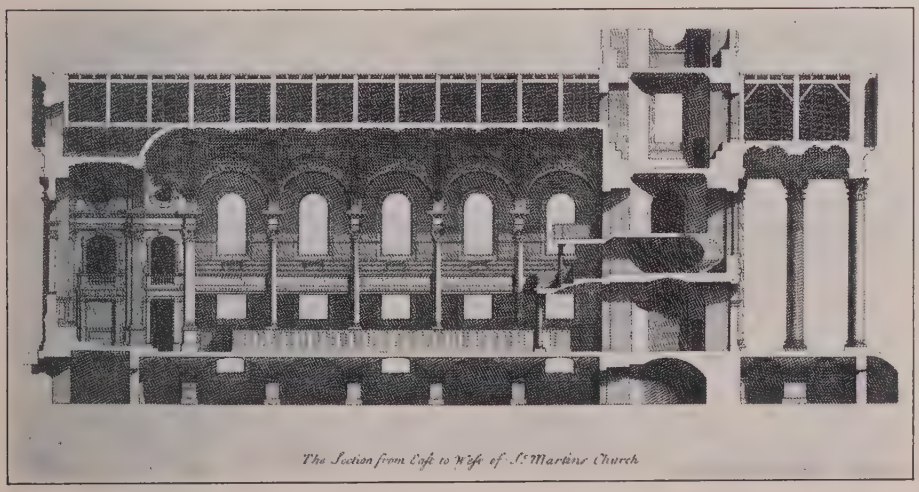
Most Colonial churches or meeting houses in New England have galleries, but the basilican plan, with columns rising to the roof, is not so very common. The columns usually stop under the gallery which they support. Once in a while two galleries on the three sides occur, as in the Old South in Boston, and in Christ Church, Guilford, now destroyed.

The restoration of the east end involves that of the pulpit. While the exact details of this cannot be given, the general scheme can readily be reached. There was a Palladian or Venetian window in the east wall. It was closed in 1846 and so does not appear in figure 17 which shows the interior in 1854, but we can see both its location and its height from the floor in the old photograph of the exterior in figure 16. It is now set, at a greater height, in the recess for the baptistery.

One hundred pounds was set down in the old estimate for "the Pulpit & Cannepey & Communion Table allso a




9. THE LENGTHWISE SECTION OF THE MEETING HOUSE LOOKING SOUTH




10. THE LENGTHWISE SECTION OF ST. MARTIN'S LOOKING SOUTH

Genteel Cushing & Curtains." This shows that there was a sounding board which it is said the late Mr. Rounds, one of the old members, could remember. The traces of the rod or chain which supported it from the ceiling are still to be seen in the floor of the garret. The window gives the height of the pulpit for, by all precedent, it was just back of the latter, with its sill about on a level with the pulpit rail. The sounding board was above it and the curtain was draped over it. On each side of the pulpit there was often, in the meeting houses, a flight of steps. In the churches, there was usually a stair on one side only. The intention seems to have been to bring the eyes of the preacher level with some point of the gallery front, a point which varied, but which seems not to have been higher than the gallery rail, as at St. Peter's, Philadelphia. The pulpit rail was apt to be on a line with the bottom of the gallery front. This may be taken as a low limit, with the middle of the front for the high point.

Fortunately we can, for the form of the pulpit, do more than make these general statements. When the old pulpit was torn out, it was given, along with the box pews which were taken out at the same time, to a Freewill Baptist Church in Centredale. This church built its meeting-house in 1832, and Mr. F. C. Angell reports a statement made by his grandfather that the pulpit and pews came from a meeting-house in Providence which was undergoing changes at the time the Centredale building was erected. The pews were finally used to panel the walls and the pulpit was put in the cellar. In 1892, the building, which had not been used for worship since 1863, was burned and with it, shame to relate, the original pulpit of the First Baptist Meeting House! One pew door remains which Mr. Angell has turned over to Prof. Watson for the Society. This agrees with the older panelling in the meeting house. It also seems to have been unpainted for some time, to judge by the color of the wood. There seems no reason to doubt the tradition and we may be thankful that Mr. Angell's memory of the old pulpit, with the seat for the deacons below it was so good that he could make a sketch which was clear

enough to permit the restoration which appears in figures 6 and 9.

It was intended to have one hundred and twenty pews. The estimate calls for this number and for one hundred and twenty pairs of pew hinges. Building the pews was to cost £216. The hinges, "if made by Jackson", would cost nine pounds. The floors of the pews were to be raised, as are those of the present slips, since the flooring of the house is estimated as "119 Squairs", "Exclusive of Pews."

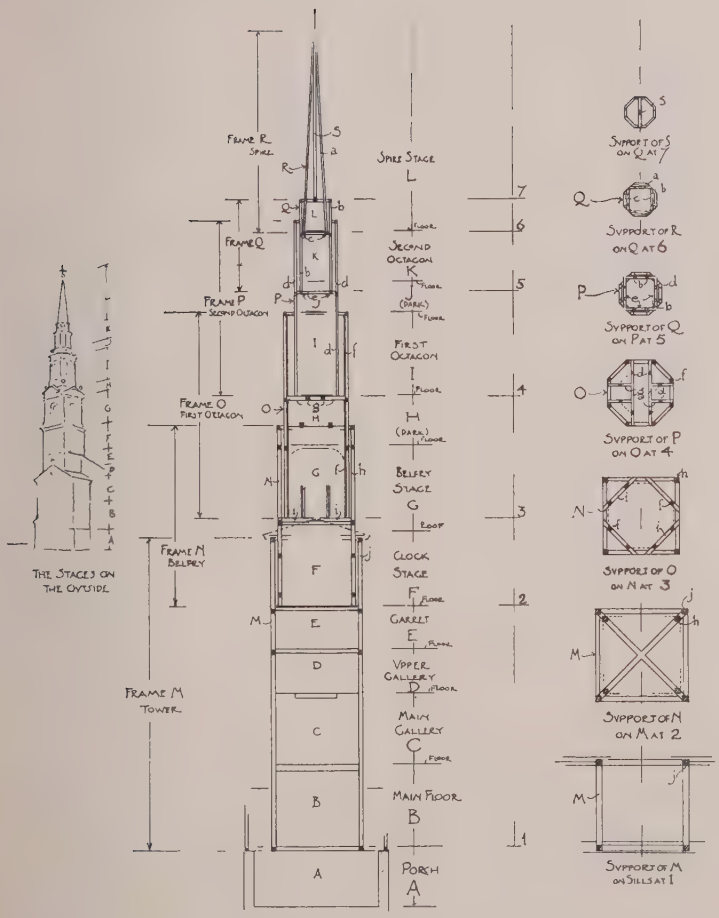
The list of pew owners, however, given in Appendix D, gives one hundred and twenty-six pews. Each was about five feet eight inches square, with sides three feet two inches or so high. The late Mr. Wilcox worked out from such information as he could get, with the old marks on the floor, the arrangement of this old seating. His plan hangs in the meeting-house. The general arrangement in figure 3, was arrived at independently. The floor can no longer be examined, and checking the plan is not now possible. A number of such old pews are still in Old St. Paul's, Wickford, while Trinity, at Newport, retains its full complement, a rare occurrence.

In the gallery the estimate called for "Seets in the Gallery with out Backs . . . £10—". We have no means of knowing whether this was carried out, but benches, with or without backs, must have been used as there were no pews till 1790 when sixty, each five feet eight inches square, were built there.

The men in charge of the undertaking seem to have recognized that there were, for the exterior, two parts in the meeting-house, the "House & Tower" and the "Steeple". They speak of framing the whole house and tower, and then estimate the cost of the steeple as something independent. They finished the house as far as they could and dedicated it and then turned their attention to the spire which was not raised until after the dedication.

They were right. The Meeting House is good, dignified and impressive. Its detail is correct and well placed. But the spire, the finest of its style in the country, makes the building. It is a marvelous piece of work. The design, of course, is due

II THE THREE SPIRES




12. THE FRAMING OF THE STEEPLE

to James Gibbs, but the design had to be chosen and it had to be worked out. The Providence Gazette, of Saturday, June 10, 1775, says "the plan of this Steeple was taken from the middle Figure in the 30th Plate of Gibbs designs". Undoubtedly Mr. Brown made the choice, but some one, working from the book still to be seen in the Athenaeum, that is, from a drawing at a scale of about a twelfth of an inch to the foot, made the lay-out needed to get the heights of the various orders, the mouldings and other details, a work of much skill and judgment. Tradition has always associated James Sumner with the spire, but it has generally emphasized his constructive ability. Howland says that among those carpenters who sought work here when the port of Boston was closed was James Sumner who "was the chief engineer in erecting the high steeple of the meeting house."[1] The Providence Gazette, in the issue just quoted, goes further: "Last Tuesday the Raising of the Steeple, which lasted three Days and an Half, was finished, and from a Draft thereof, on a large Scale made by Mr. James Sumner, Master Workman from Boston, as well as from the Frame now raised, 'tis thought it will be a most elegant Piece of Architecture."

## III

## THE CONSTRUCTION

On Wednesday, June 3, 1774, "Some workmen broke ground for putting in a Foundation for the new Baptist Meeting House." So says the *Providence Gazette* in its issue of Saturday, June 7th. There was, aside from the plastering, comparatively little mason work. The old estimate allowed 340 cords of stone to which "20 cord Stones more" were added. There

1. Stone, *Life of Howland*, p. 37.

were wanted "27hh$^{ds}$ Lime for Foundations & pillers", that is supports for the great inside columns, and the labor was put at £75 "Including the Digging for foundation." Some of the stone was furnished, probably, by Phinehas and William Brown and John Pettis who all subscribed, to be paid in stone, the amounts which will be found opposite their names in Appendix C. Connecticut stone steps were estimated for five outside doors.

We do not know the name of the master mason, but it is safe to conjecture that he was Zephaniah Andrews who had built University Hall and the Russell house—later Zachariah Allen's and still later the Clarendon Hotel,—and who, in 1786, did the brickwork of John Brown's own house. It is almost a certainty that John Brown, as committee man, would employ him. It is doubtful if there was any contract. The work was probably done by the day.

The mason work was ready for the frame by the latter part of August, if not before. In the *Gazette* of August 27th the managers of the lottery[1] announced the drawing of the "first Class", and the building committee added:

"N. B. On Monday next [August 29] the Workmen will begin to raise the said Meeting-House. All Carpenters and others who are willing to assist, are desired to attend on such days as shall be most convenient for them, for which they will receive the Thanks of the Committee." Those who think that the reward was meager should look carefully among the later items in the estimate, in Appendix B.

This fixes the date of the raising as August 29th, unless it rained. The house and the tower were probably put up then. They are mentioned together in the estimate where "Suppose 1200 Days 4/, on an average" was allowed for the labor of "Frameing the whole House & Tower". If the framing was begun with the digging in June it took sixty or seventy days to finish it, which means that a gang of twenty men or more was

1. The General Assembly in June, 1774, had granted the Society a lottery for raising £2000. It was divided into six classes and was "supposed", in the estimate of the cost of the building, to net £1900. Guild, *B. U. and Manning*, 221 ff.; Arnold, *Address*, 11 and note.

at work upon it, in addition to those busied in getting out finish.

No definite master carpenter is named by tradition or by such documents as we have except James Sumner. Jonathan Hammon who is mentioned in the accounts of the work at University Hall in such a way as to make him seem the master workman, subscribed £12 toward the cost of the meeting house, "in Labour" as Comfort Wheaton put down the same amount "in work", and James Wheaton £6 with the same condition. One of these men may have had charge of the house and the tower. The steeple was apparently a different matter. Of this, Sumner, by all the evidence, had control. It is possible that Sumner was the master carpenter on the whole work. It is not known when he came to Providence, but, on Howland's testimony he was here soon after the work began and probably at the outset. The others may have been under his general supervision. Certainly he was in some responsible place in March, 1775, from an order by John Brown on the eleventh or fourth of that month:

> "Brother Nich° Brown
>
> please to Deliver to M$^{r}$
> Sumner or James Wheaton one Cask of 10$^{d}$ Nails for the Meeting house & Charge it to S$^{d}$ House.
>
> p Jn° Brown

From this it looks as if Sumner and Wheaton were the leading men.

The method of raising the house must have been that used for dwellings then and for long after—in fact, until a day within the memory of living carpenters. The frame was all done in what was called "scribe and tumble" fashion put together on the ground with mortise and tenon and pinned at all joints, so that nailing was quite rare. Each of the sides was complete and each side was raised by itself, one side after the other, and the plates were pinned together at the corners and the girts pinned into the corner posts. The roof was raised by hoisting

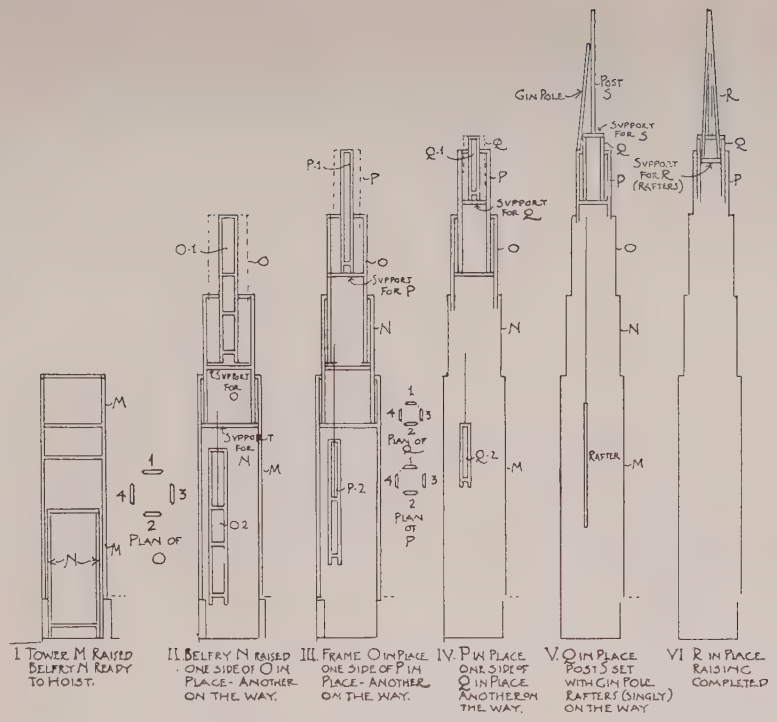
one after another of the trusses of the nave to the tops of the posts from the floor of the house where the framing was done. The nave and the aisle trusses were set separately and the long rafter which runs over the back of the main truss was carried down to the plate and the braces set up under it. This will be clearer on a study of the section in figure 5. It will be noticed that these trusses are, stick for stick, the same as those in the roof of St. Martin's in Gibbs's section, figure 7.

On June 10, 1775, the *Providence Gazette*, in the small space it allotted to the news of Providence, announced:—"Last Tuesday the Raising of the Steeple, which lasted three Days and an Half, was finished, and from a Draft thereof, on a large Scale made by Mr. James Sumner, Master Workman from Boston, as well as from the frame now raised, 'tis thought it will be a most elegant Piece of Architecture.

It is 108 Feet from the Top of the Tower, and 185 Feet from the Ground to the Top of the Vane. . . ."

Any one who climbs beyond the old upper gallery stage into the belfry and the steeple above and examines, with wonder, the size and the number of the posts and the girts in the bewildering forest of framing, will agree that no gang which could be put on the limited space the tower affords could have raised the steeple stick by stick and framed it together in three days and a half. Apart from the costly staging and derricks and shears required, it would have been a physical impossibility to do that amount of heavy framing in so short a time. It would have been equally impossible to frame the steeple on the ground, like the side of a house, and push and pull it up by main strength as the walls of the meeting house were raised.

How, then, was it raised? It was done somewhat in the same way in which Ithiel Towne, according to an eyewitness quoted by Mr. George Dudley Seymour, raised the spire of the Center Church on the Green at New Haven—it was pulled up through the tower. Henry Howe wrote in 1884, says Mr. Seymour, "An old citizen tells us that the spire was built within the tower and he saw it raised by windlass and tackle. I was, he says, a schoolboy at the time. It took about two hours and




13. THE METHOD OF RAISING THE STEEPLE

14. THE OUTSIDE OF THE MEETING HOUSE IN 1789

went up beautifully."[1] Mr. Seymour also quotes a historical discourse at Farmington by Noah Porter, Jr.,[1] afterwards president of Yale, in 1841: "The steeple above the belfry was raised entire. ." Again, in 1873, Dr. Porter said:[1] ". . . the spire itself was completed below and lifted to its place along the tower." The spire, Mr. Seymour suggests, may have been pulled up inside the tower, as in New Haven, and it seems as if this must have been done, since the posts of the belfry rest on cross beams several feet below the top of the tower, and the spire therefore, would have had to be hoisted many feet too high and lowered again to its place.

A glance at the skeleton section of the steeple in figure 12 will make clear the type of framing used in these old spires. They are in several stages, but these do not rest, in the framing, one on the top of the other, as they seem to do in the finished work; they are telescoped, so to speak, the upper into the lower. For instance, the frame of the belfry stage, N, rests on two diagonal cross-beams nearly fifteen feet below the plate of the tower frame. In like manner the octagonal stage O, above the belfry, starts far below the top of that stage and near the level of the top of the tower, M. The other stages are treated in the same way.

In figure 13 the method of raising the steeple is suggested. It was all hoisted up inside the tower in sections. It probably was not jacked up or pulled up as a whole.

The tower was already raised but its front had been left open, at least up to the floor level of stage D, the huge diagonal braces show that, for they are not framed into the posts, but are bolted to them on their inside faces. The tower frame, then, could act as a derrick.

Inside the tower was raised the frame of the belfry, N. Its posts, which are of pine, were pulled up by tackles hitched to the plate of the tower. It was then hoisted up to its proper place and the huge cross-beams, marked "support for N", and shown, too, at the level 2 in figure 12, were put under it.

1. George Dudley Seymour, "The Spire of Center Church, New Haven," in the *Year Book of the Architectural Club of New Haven, 1925.*

The octagonal frame O was sent up in parts. Four sides, each completely framed and numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the plan in figure 13, were hoisted through the spaces between the diagonals that carried N, and the octagon was completed by pinning on the remaining plates and putting in the girts. In a similar way were the octagons P and Q handled. The spire proper, the highest stage R, had to be framed stick by stick for it would not go, when complete, through the spaces in the support for P, as is shown in the plan in figure 12.

In this manner the trouble and expense of staging the steeple was avoided and each stage was made to serve as a derrick for hoisting the next as well as to carry what little staging was needed for working upon it. The stages for finishing could be built out through the openings. The boarding could be put on overhand from the inside. Some staging was probably needed for setting the vane which was made by Samuel Hamlin.

The sum of £74.10 was set down in the old estimate for "Painting the whole outside including foundation steple and all computed at 1788 y$^{ds}$", and £15 for "d$^{o}$ in side, all the wood work except the Pews & flours." Gov. Arnold says[1] the spire was painted in 1787 and that, in 1791 Nicholas Brown's daughter, Hope, offered to give the painting of the interior of the house, and his context implies that the building had not till then been painted. It may be that the wood work had received only a priming coat.

An early vote of the Society decreed the use of slate on the roof, but the estimate calls for "60$^{m}$ Shingles a 21/ . . £63", and allows £10 for "paint$^{g}$ the roofe with Tar & Spannish Brown."

There is still a little paving of cobblestones close to the wall on the west side of the house. It is impossible to say how old this may be, but it is very interesting in the light of the old estimate which has an item of £45 for "Prepairing, Gravilling & Paveing a Strip from the Street to the Tower 30 Feet wide", and another of £50 for "Paveing a Strip Round the House 16 feet wide."

1. S. G. Arnold, *Address on the One Hundredth Anniversary*, p. 17. MS. Records.

A clock and a bell were provided at the outset. Stone, in his *Mechanics' Festival*, records a tradition that the committee purchased a one-day time piece and notes Caleb Wheaton's comment that the clock was built by a Christian since it was so well made. At any rate it did not cease to tell time for the congregation till 1873 and is still on duty in the tower of the Congdon street meeting house.

The present clock has larger dials than the old one, for the framing around the openings is all new and the old girts have been cut off. There were originally, moreover, only three dials, those on the north, the west, and the south faces. On the eastern face of the tower there was, as will appear in figure 16, a plain round-headed or "Cumpas" window. The old estimate gives for "a Clock and Dial Plate . . . £100".

"A Bell and Hanging Suppose. . 1200 lbs a 2/6 & £10 for hang^g" was set down at £160. The bell imported from England with the quaint inscription upon it weighed 2515 pounds.[1] It was broken in 1787 and was recast, and again cracked in 1844 when it had to be recast twice.

## IV

## THE CHANGES

The changes in the meeting house have been many and some of them have been sweeping, but they have been mostly on the inside. They began, as we might expect, with the seating and soon extended with the growing need for room. On the outside, the building, except at the east end, has changed very little. The old grading has been done away and corresponding alterations have been made in the steps. The light space around the basement has altered the setting to any one stand-

1. Arnold, *ut sup.* p. 15.

ing near though not to the distant observer, but a good deal of the old slope is still there, and, above the water table, the house, if it were not for the eastern baptistery added in 1884, would look almost as it did in 1775.

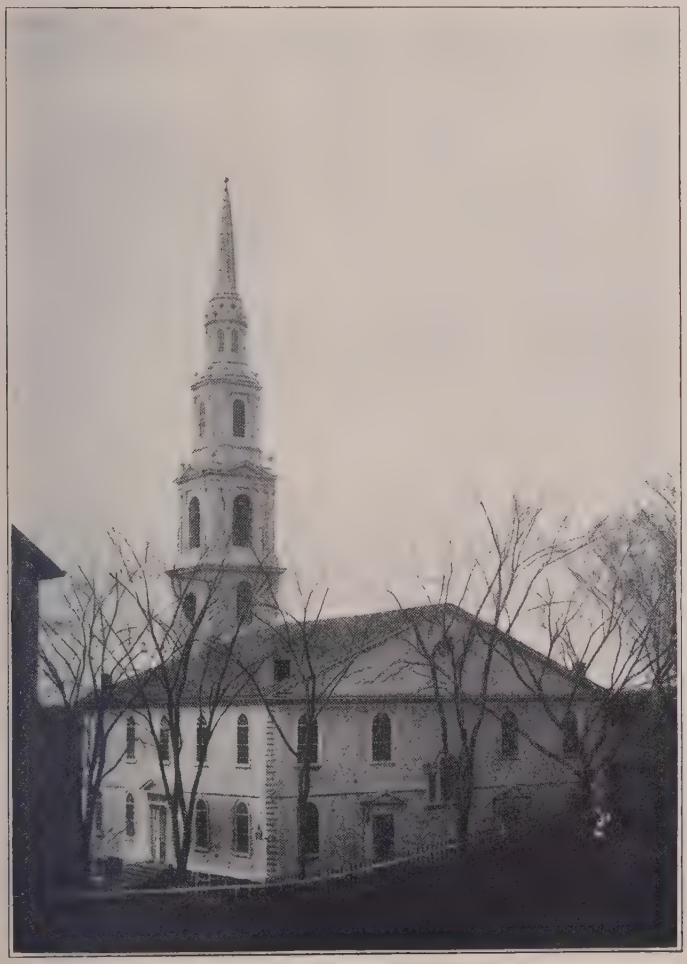
Early pictures of the meeting house from which we may get an idea of its original appearance and of its original surroundings are almost wanting. An engraving on copper by Samuel Hill,[1] of Boston, appeared in the Massachusetts Magazine for August, 1789. This appears in figure 14. Another early print, a lithograph, seems to be a copy of this. A steel engraving of 1839 shows the meeting house set in an English church yard, and this apparently was copied in a print which has a title in French and Spanish. There is no other view before the steel engraving of a drawing by J. W. Lincoln in 1856. About that time the photographs appear. In figure 15 is reproduced an old daguerreotype which is the earliest absolutely trustworthy picture we have. Then come the old interior, figure 17, from a photograph said to date from 1854, and the old east end in figure 16. The view shown in the frontispiece was probably taken in the later seventies, since it shows the present clock.

In weighing the evidence of old prints there is always, of course, the question, did the artist draw from the actual building or from memory, from some description or from some slight sketch by another hand. In the case of Hill's print it might seem at first that he must have worked from the building. But—he omits the forebuilding from which, as the church now stands, the tower rises.

In his picture the tower, in its own width, comes straight up from the ground. This is a treasonable statement. If it is true the forebuilding must be a later widening of the tower. The only witness we can now question is the house itself, and while some of the present dispositions of the forebuilding are very hard to explain, the testimony of the fabric, as far as we can now get at it, condemns Hill's work as inaccurate. There

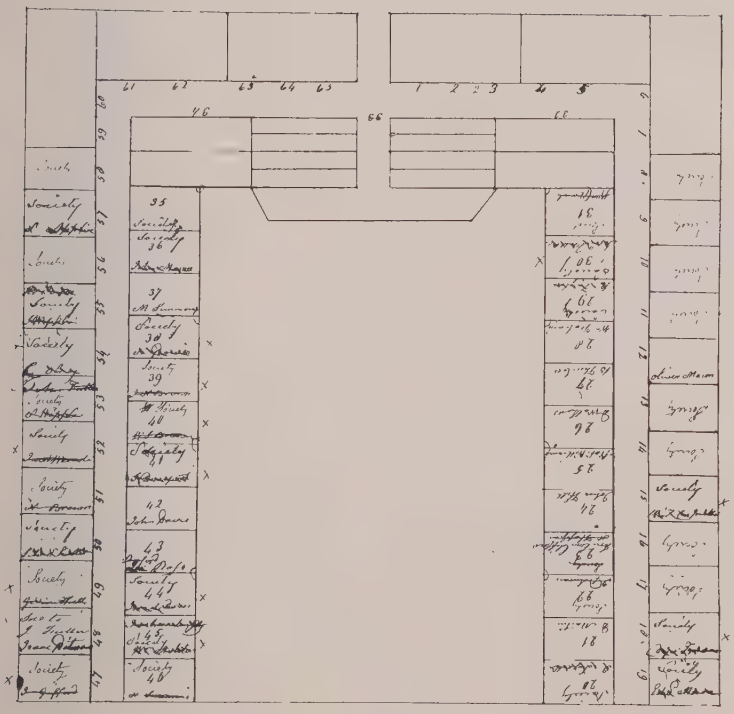
1. Bayley and Goodspeed edrs., *Dunlap's History of the Arts of Design*, III, 308.

15. THE OUTSIDE OF THE MEETING HOUSE IN THE FIFTIES



16. THE EAST END OF THE MEETING HOUSE
BEFORE THE OUTSIDE CHANGES

17. THE INSIDE OF THE MEETING HOUSE LOOKING EAST IN 1854



18. THE PLAN OF THE GALLERY BETWEEN 1808 AND 1839

is nothing to show that the tower was not always in the fore-building as it now is.

Until 1802 the space under the house was simply a cellar which was let for storage. We do not know where the doors were. It seems unlikely that merchandize would be allowed entrance through the door in the tower. It is very possible that the present side doors, in spite of the difficulty offered by the old grades, are in the place of earlier ones, for it is significant that the old estimate called for seven outside doors. Connecticut stone steps were estimated for but five, but all the seven were to have "Fruntices & Casings."

A change in the basement was made in this year, 1802. A room was built in it for the use of the church, the first of a series of changes which finally brought the whole space below the house into use and which has hardly ended in our own day. This movement need not be traced in detail for, important in the life of the church as it certainly was, its effect on the architectural quality of the great building above it was very slight.

We have noted the primitive seating originally proposed for the galleries. In 1788 pews were talked of and in 1790 sixty were built, each five feet eight inches square, arranged, as is shown by figure 18 which reproduces an ancient "Platt of the Galleries" found by Mr. C. H. Guild. The wide upper platform in the galleries which now holds two rows of slips, apparently carried the back line of pews while the front line was close to the parapet or front of the gallery.[1]

A change in the musical part of a ritual generally involves a change in ecclesiastical architecture, and to this rule, which is nearly if not quite as old as Christianity, the First Baptist Meeting House is no exception.

There was trouble over the bringing in of a bass-viol in 1804. This was, no doubt to accompany the "choristers", for singing was already a part of the service. "The chorist-

1. This old plan probably represents a change from the original arrangement in the front gallery, since we know from the records, June 29, 1789, that it was intended to leave "about 20 feet on each side the door that enters into the Gallery to be appropriated for Seats or benches to accomodate Strangers or those who have no Pews".

er seats", apparently in the front gallery, are mentioned in the records on June 25 1791[1], and again in 1793. The bass-viol came to stay and, on April 20, 1807, the Society voted that the seats in the gallery "be so altered as to accomodate the singers." The old plan in figure 18 probably shows this change which must have been slight as it cost only about sixty-six dollars.

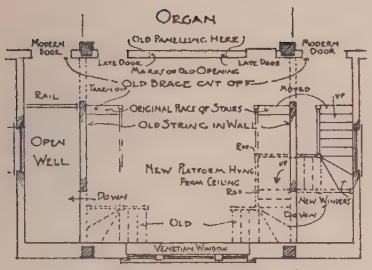
The most sweeping change came in 1832. Some years before that date a movement toward more comfortable and more fashionable seats had been started, but in this year it was carried out. Nor did the innovation stop there. Not only were all the old square pews, the whole one hundred and twenty-six, taken out but the old pulpit and its canopy were torn away also, and pews and pulpit bestowed upon the Freewill Baptist meeting house in Centerdale, as has already been recorded.

A few years later, in 1839, the sixty pews in the gallery followed their brethren on the main floor, but here the Society was apparently more thrifty, for a close examination of the backs of the slips which have replaced the older seating, will pretty surely prove that these are made up out of the wreckage of the gallery pews.

A pulpit of the Greek Revival type parts of which are now in the tower took the place of the original lofty structure from which Manning preached his dedication sermon one hundred and fifty years ago. To this preceded the curious form which is given in figure 17, which shows the inside in 1854.

It is difficult for us to imagine the meeting house without the organ but that was not set up till 1834, a gift by Nicholas Brown. To make room for it, the old upper gallery had to be taken down. The entrance to this was plastered up, with the lunettes which lighted it from the two round windows still to be seen on the outside one on either side of the tower. It soon became a tradition and few of the younger people know that it ever existed.

1. On motion of Dr. Manning it was voted that: "two seats inclosed in one pew in front of the gallery and and south of the chorister seats be finished . . and appropriated to . . members of the College . . ." and that two others, on the north, should be for the "use of such as may join in the music."




19. THE CHANGES IN THE STAIRS TO THE UPPER GALLERY IN 1834

The destruction of the old upper gallery brought about a change in the stairs thereto which is shown in figure 19. The old stairs from the main gallery level were taken out of the tower. One flight was re-set, in part, in the forebuilding at the south, the other was done away with so that the upper part, as it comes down from the old gallery stops dead against the north wall of the tower.

In 1846 the final touch was put to the new picture—the old "Vernition" or Palladian window, once behind the pulpit, was covered with plaster. The bare wall covers it, in figure 17.

All this, with the change in the gallery pews and the new pulpit must have made the interior a strange place to the older people. Gov. Arnold remarked: "But little besides the elegant chandelier remained to remind one of the past."[1] The cluster, the gift of Hope Brown, and lighted, says tradition, on the evening of her marriage to Mr. Ives, is, happily, still hanging in its place and giving light to the house.

The inside was painted in 1791, perhaps in 1832 because of the great changes, and again in 1846 or 1847. The paint of 1846 was almost certainly white, as is that on the woodwork today, and so, probably, was that of 1832, but in 1791 the painters would have used the grey green color of Colonial times which is still to be seen in parts of the tower and on the hidden side of some of the doors.

Such is the history of the meeting house fabric. If its past is safe, even with all the changes we regret, it is good to hear that the future is secure. For, well as our fathers wrought the beautiful house they have left us, their work is brought to naught if we of this day do not preserve as well as revere and admire.

1. Arnold, *Address ut sup. 19.*

# APPENDICES

## A. The Copy of Gibbs's Book

The Providence Athenaeum owns a copy of the "Book of Architecture" by James Gibbs, published in London in 1728. It is a folio bound in leather and shows signs of considerable use. It is, according to tradition, the book which was used in the selection of the design for the steeple. Dr. Guild says: "An old copy of this work, stated to be the one used in building the church, was lately in the possession of the Messrs. Tingley. ."[1] Gov. Arnold says of the book: "probably the one used in building this Church. ."[2]

The old book was given to the Athenaeum by the two daughters of Mr. Alfred Stone who bought the book, mainly because of that very tradition, from Mr. Henry Tingley, long a designer of monuments in Providence. He inherited it from Silvanus and Samuel Tingley whose names are written across the lower part of the page on which the three spires stand, figure 11, with the statement that they bought the book from John Truman. On the back of another page are the words "bought of John Truman Architect." The Tingleys would be interested in the book because it contained many designs for monuments.

Higher up on the same page is the legend: "John Truman Bo$^{t}$ of Caleb Ormsbee Es$^{q}$."

The pedigree of the book, then, is complete and authentic back to Caleb Ormsbee, the architect of the earlier meeting house of the First Congregational Church, the building destroyed by fire in 1814.

It is known that Mr. Joseph Brown possessed a copy of Gibbs Book of Architecture. It is an item in his inventory.[3]

1. *Guild, Brown Univ. and Manning*, p. 223, note.

2. *Arnold, Address*, p. 10.

3. North Parlour.
   1 Mahogany Desk and Book Case
   Gibbs's Architecture
   Swans Designs
   Prov. Probate Rec., Will Book VII., pp. 12, 13.

20. THE INSIDE OF THE MEETING HOUSE LOOKING WEST IN 1924

21. THE INSIDE OF THE MEETING HOUSE LOOKING EAST IN 1924

There is only the constant tradition, however, to prove the identity of Mr. Brown's copy with that at the Athenaeum. The tradition has every probability behind it, everything short of certainty. The Tingleys apparently believed it and they must have received it from John Truman. He could easily have learned the truth from Caleb Ormsbee who was living in Mr. Brown's lifetime and who no doubt bought the book from the latter's estate after his death. Truman may have had another source of information in Jonathan Hammon, if the Sally Hammon to whom he was married by Dr. Gano, on January 28, 1794 was a granddaughter of the old carpenter. It is possible that he was an apprentice of Hammon. It is more likely, in view of the ages of the men, that he was Ormsbee's apprentice and that Ormsbee may have learned his trade of Hammon.

There can be little doubt that this is the book.

## B. The Estimate of Cost.

Cost of the Baptist Meeting house now Building viz.

| | |
|---|---|
| 320, Cord Stones & Carting on the Spot a 7/ | £119.0.0 |
| Masons Work for Laying ditto & Attendence Including the Digging for foundation | 75. |
| 27hhds Lime for foundation & pillers a 18/ | 24.6. |
| 32000 Feet Oak Bords a 37/6 | 60. |
| 13m Feet 1/2 Inch Chesnut Bords a 30/ | 19.10 |
| 20 Thousand Egg Harber Bords a 54/ | 54. |
| 20 Thousand Clear Bords & Plank supposed for outside to cost 4.10/ P Thousd | 90. |
| 50 Thousand Clear Green do with Cartg & Sticking up, a 66/ | 165. |
| 65 Thousand Eastern Merchantable Bords with Cartg and Sticking.....a 48/ | 156. |
| 32 Cumpus windows 5 Squairs wide & 6 high beside the Compos heads, of Glass 10 by 13 a 64/ Including Stuf but Exclusive of Glass | 96. |
| 1600 Feet Window Glass a £5 | 80. |
| Frameing the whole House & Tower Suppose 1200 Days a 4/ on an average | 240.0.0 |
| 130m Feet Timber Viz 100m a 4/. 15m a 5/. & 15m a 6/ | 282.10 |
| 12m Clabbords Suppose to Lay 4 Inches out on an average a £6 | 72. |
| 60m [Clabbords]* Shingles a 21/ | 63. |
| 2 Dorrick Vernition Windows Suppose may Cost Exclusive of Glass | 18. |
| 8 Round windows, Stuf & work without Glass | 5.8. |
| 70m Larthes a 12/ | 42. |
| 350m Larth Nails a 2/6 | 43.15 |
| 70m Shingle do a 3/ | 10.10 |
| 70m 6d Nails a 5/ | 17.10 |
| 20m 8d Nails a 7/, 200m 10d ditto a 8/ | 87. |
| 60m 20d Nails a 11/ 5cwt 24d ditto a 6d | 47. |
| 2cwt 30d Nails a 56/ &ct 2cwt Deck Nails a do | 11.4 |
| 100lb Spikes and 2500lb of other Iron work a 6d | 65. |
| 18 pr. Large Hinges a 6/0 | 5.8 |
| 120 pr Pew Hinges a 1/6 if made by Jackson | 9. |
| about 3000 yards Plastering and Larthing a 6d p yd | 75. |
| [40 hhd Lime for plastering a 18/]* | [ * ] |
| 150 Bushels Hair | 7.10 |
| 40 hhds Lime for plastering a 18/ | 36. |
| 80 Load Sand a 2/ | 8. |
| Carrd over | £2084.11.0 |

* Crossed out in MS.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cost of the New Baptis Meeting house brot over | | £2084.11 |
| Painting the whole out Side including foundation Steple and all computed at 1788 yds a 10d | | 74.10 |
| do in Side, all the wood work except the Pews & flours | | 15. |
| a Bell and Hanging Suppose *[suppose] 1200lb a 2/6 & £10 for hangg | | 160. |
| Steple suppose will cost | | 400. |
| 8 Collums a 6½ Dollers together with Boreing & Makg a 120/ | | 48. |
| Conecticut Stone Steps to 5 Dores Suppose will take 26 Steps which with the Freight & Setting will cost | | 150. |
| 2 windows Short Carrd out | | 6.8 |
| | | £2938.9 |
| Work in Bording the Roofe 78 Squairs a 2/10 | £11.1 | |
| Bording the Sides, Tower & Porches a 3/6 200 Squairs [Bording the whole outside]* | 35.0 | |
| Laying 60m Shingles a 5/6 | 16.10 | |
| Laying 12m Clabbords with plaing &c a £6 | 72.— | |
| Makg the Jetts Round the House & Tower | 167.19 | |
| Water table 420 feet a 5d | 8.15 | |
| plain Jett to the porches | 5. | |
| Gable End Cornice for do | 1.6 | |
| plastering the Foundation | 15— | |
| 150 Bushel Hair more a 1/ | 7.10 | |
| the Building 120 Pews a 36/ | 216.— | |
| do the Pulpit & Cannepey & Communion Table also a Genteel Cushing & Curtins | 100— | |
| A Dorick Porticoe before the Dore | 60— | |
| 12 Pillasters Fluted with Intablatures Compleet | 36— | |
| Caseing 32 winders with plain Edge Casing a 9/— | 14.8 | |
| 8 do Round do | 1.4 | |
| 2 do Vernition do | 6 | |
| 119 Squairs of flours Exclusive of Pews a 7/ | 41.13 | |
| 90 yds Brast work to the Gallery with Belextion pannills & Single Cornice and Double architrave | 30.— | |
| Frameing for the Brest work & Cealing the Same all Round the Inside | 6.— | |
| Seets in the Gallery with out Backs | 10 | |
| Carried over | £861.6 | £2938.9 |

* Crossed out in MS.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| bro$^{t}$ over | £861.6/ | £2938.9/ |
| The whole Carpenters work of the upper Gallery | 20.— | |
| Giting out the Ribs & puting up all the Sealings over Head | 50.— | |
| Caseing 8 post Beede Caseing | 4.11— | |
| d$^{o}$ under Side the Gallery Beems | 2.11— | |
| 160 Steps in the Tower & Porches | 40.— | |
| Suppose 40 Meener Sort in the Tower above the upper Gallery a 1/8 | 3.6.8 | |
| 2 Inside Dores to the porches below & 1 Double d$^{o}$ to the Tower below, makes 4 Pannil Dores Includ$^{g}$ the Caseing | 7.8 | |
| 4 Quarter Round battend Bases for the Gallerys Includ$^{g}$ Cas$^{g}$ | 5.15 | |
| Flours in the porches omitted before 8 Squairs | 2.16 | |
| Caseing posts in the Poaches & Tower | 2.14 | |
| 7 Outside Dores with Fruntices & Casings | 43.16 | |
| petitions for the Stairs in the Tower | 2.— | |
| Hanging the winders Includ$^{g}$ weights & all | 15.— | |
| Levelling Joice under the Gallerys and in the Tower & porches 56 Sq$^{rs}$ | 7.— | |
| Cordage & Blocks | 15.— | |
| Licker at Raiseing & at other times | 22.— | |
| Prepairing, Gravilling & Paveing a Strip from the Street to the Tower 30 Feet wide | 45.— | |
| Paveing a Strip Round the House 16 feet wide | 50.— | |
| 10 $^{c}$w$^{t}$ Role Lead and puting it on | 20.— | |
| Sundrys omitted Supposed | 100.— | |
| the Land bo$^{t}$ of John Angell | | £855 — |
| d$^{o}$ of Amaziah waterman | | 855 — |
| | £1320.3.8 | £4648.9– |
| | 4648.9 | |
| | £5968.12.8 | |
| Stage for Commencement | 6.— | |
| a Clock and Dial Plate | 100.— | |
| Litning Rods | 12.— | |
| Work in Fixing & puting up the Rustick | 40.— | |
| Glazing & Stuff &$^{c}$ | 30.— | |
| | £6156.12.8 | |
| Lock$^{s}$ above & below 4 Small Pillows to support the frunt Gallerys ^ | 12.— | |
| Work in tak$^{g}$ Seets from old meeting house & puting in new | 3.— | |
| 20 Cord Stones more | 7.— | |
| paint$^{g}$ the Roofe with Tar & Spannish Brown | 10.— | |
| | £6188.12.8 | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Subscription to the House | £2930.— |
| Suppose the Lottery to Neet | 1900.— |
| old Baptist Meeting House & Lott beside what is to pay Elder Winsor & others | 240.— |
| 100 Pews a £13.10 | 1350.— |
| | £6420.— |

Endorsed: Calculation of the cost of the Meeting house made by John Jencks Jn$^{o}$ Brown Cahoon & Jo$^{s}$ Brown Made In Aug$^{t}$ 1774.

## C. The List of Subscribers

A list of Subscriber to the meet$^{g}$ House
Payable 1/2 by the Tenth of April, 1/4 by the
10$^{th}$ June, & remainder 10$^{th}$. Sep$^{t}$ next
Dated 14$^{th}$ day of Feb$^{y}$ 1774.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Daniel Jenckes | £400.0 | |
| Nich$^{o}$ Brown | 450.0 | |
| John Brown | 350.0 | |
| John Jenckes | 250.0 | |
| Joseph Brown | 250.0 | |
| William Russel | 200.0 | |
| Benj$^{a}$ Thurber, Edw$^{d}$ Thurber & Daniel Cahoon | 200.0 | £2100.0 |
| James Manning | 30.0.0 | |
| David Hoell | 60.0 | |
| Nath$^{l}$ Wheaton | 20.0. | |
| Nicholas Power | 30.0. | |
| Eph$^{m}$ Wheaton | 18.0. | |
| Christopher Sheldon | 60.0. | |
| Sam$^{l}$ Warner | 18.0. | |
| Joseph E. Tillinghast | 18.0. | |
| Jonathan Hammon to be paid in Labour | 12.0. | |
| Comfort Wheaton in work | 12.0. | |
| Martin Simmons in work upon the House | 12.0. | |
| Arthur Fenner Jn$^{r}$ | 12.0. | |
| Daniel Tillinghast | 39.0. | |
| William Holroyd | 18.0.0 | 349.0 |
| James Arnold | 15.0. | |
| Aaron Mason, in Materials for the Building | 12.0. | |
| Sam$^{l}$ Thurber Jn$^{r}$ in Materials to the Building | 12.0. | |
| William Corlis to be paid in Materials in his way | 30.0. | |
| Nath$^{l}$ Saunders to be paid in work | 6.0. | |
| Timothy Mason | 3.0. | |
| Pardon Sheldon | 12.0. | |
| Benj$^{a}$ Alger | 12.0. | |
| Andrew Cole to be paid in work | 6.0. | |
| W$^{m}$ Simmons to be p$^{d}$ in work | 8.0. | |
| Thomas Stodard to be paid in work | 7.0. | |
| John Pettis to be paid in Stones | 9.0. | |
| Amos Horton to be paid in work | 10.0. | |
| Obadiah Sprague to be paid in work | 3.0. | 153.0. |
| | | £2602.0.0. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | James Wheaton to be paid in work | £6.0. |
| | Jehu Smith | 9.0. |
| | Joshua Lindley, to be paid in work | 6.0. |
| | Jonathon Knowls, to be paid in work | 6.0. |
| pd Jno B | Benj. Comstock | 3.0. |
| | Edward Knowles to be paid in Carpenter work | 9.0. |
| | Asa Hopkins in Carpenter worke | 6.0 |
| | Joseph Olney will Glaze the House if the Materials is found if living | |
| | Timothy Sheldon Jnr | 3.0. |
| | Silvanus Jenckes | 9.0. |
| | Melzer Packard | 3.0. |
| | Benja Stelle | 15.0. |
| | | 75. |
| | Joseph Arnold to be paid in work | 6. |
| | Chisr Arnold & Son to pay in our work | 15.0. |
| | Abraham Whipple | 10.0. |
| pd | Joseph Tillinghast | 15.0. |
| | Arthur Fenner, when I can do it | 12.0. |
| | Simon Smith | 15.0. |
| | William Wheaton to be pd in Materials or work | 3.0. |
| | Martin Thurber to be paid in Materials or work | 3.0. |
| | James Olney to be paid in work | 3.0. |
| | William Brown, Including one Pew to be paid in Carting in six months | 50.0. |
| | Phinehas Brown to be paid in Stone | 5.0. |
| | Daniel Brown, to be paid in stone | 3.0. |
| | Daniel Hawkins, to be paid in Timber & bords | 6.0. |
| | Dexter Brown, to be pd in one Year ....with Interest | 5.0. |
| | Paul Tew to be paid in 6 months | 9.0. |
| | John Tillinghast to be paid in our way | 6.0. |
| | James Westcott, to be paid in six months in West Inds Goods | 10.0. |
| | Nicho Cooke | 30.0. |
| | Ephram Bowen Fifteen pounds, | 15.0. |
| | Ambrose Page to be paid in English Goods out of Shop | 15.0. |
| | Saml Whitman to be paid in produce | 15.0. |
| | LM | 326.0. |
| | | 2602. |
| | | £2928.0. |

Endorsed: Copy of the Meeting House Subscription.

## D. The List of Pew Owners.

1 Thurber & Cahoon
2 Hill & Alger
3 James Wheaton
4 Asa Hopkins
5 David Burr
6 Barnard Eddy
7 Wm Cuzens
8 Nathl Wheaton
9 Obd Sprague
10 Pardon Sheldon
11 Jos E. Tillinghast
12 Wm Bowen
13 Wm Corlis
14 Wm & James Wheaton
15 Nathl Saunders
16 Nicho Brown
17 Jno Cross
18 Jos Arnold
19 Jona Russel
20 Thos Lynsey
21 Coll. Wm. Brown
22 Edwd Thurber
23 John Tillingst
24 Jno Brown
25 Martin Simmons
26 Wm Brayton
27 Nehemiah Sheldon
28 Comte
29 Comte
30 Jos Tillingst
31 Jos D. Russel
32 N. Brown
33 Jona Knowles
34 Aaron Mason
35 Danl Cahoon
36 Welcome Arnold
37 John Pettis
38 Benja Lynsey
39 Bacon & Black
40 John Brown
41 James Arnold
42 Nicho Cooke
43 Saml Thurber
44 Carpenter & Whitecar
45 Simon Smith
46 Danl Bucklin
47 Wait Still Corlis
48 Arthur Fenner
49 Amos Horton
50 Rigg & Wait [?] [illegible]
51 Nicho Power
52 Jos Olney
53 Silvs Jenckes
54 Jos Hewes
55 David Howell
56 Saml Warner
57 Wm Green
58 Wm Holroyd
59 Sol. Drown
60 Josiah Gifford
61 Edwd Knowles
62 Phins Brown
63 Melzer Packard
64 Israel Low
65 P. Tew now Howell
66 Jos Brown
67 Abner Thayer
68 Rufus Hopkins
69 Comte
70 Hope Brown & Dauger
71 Henry Tillingst
72 Martin Thurber
73 Ambrose Page
74 Wm Russel
75 Abm Whipple
76 Comte
77 Chars Easterbooks
78 David Martin
79 Dexter Brown
80 Parsonage
81 Chisr Sheldon
82 Ephm Bowen
83 Edwd Woodman
84 Esek Hopkins
85 Jno B. Hopkins
86 Jos Rogers
87 Barnard & Brown
88 Sheldon & Smith
89 Joana Jenckes
90 Laws & Whitecar
91 Timo Mason
92 Danl Tillinghast
93 N. Brown
94 Chisr Olney
95 Benja Comstock
96 Jos Brown
97 Wm Wall
98 Samr Whitman
99 Wm Rhodes
100 Chisr Arnold
101 Jona Arnold
102 Edwd [?] Thurber
103 Danl Hawkins
104 Jona Jenckes Jnr
105 Pitman & Fish
106 Allen Brown
107 Jona Dexter
108 Andrew Cole
109 Wm Barton
110 James Westcott
111 Stodard & Clap
112 Jos Bucklin
113 Nathl Jacobs
114 Wm Seamon
115 Jno Jenckes
116 Marye Kinnicutt
117 James Sabin
118 Benja Thurber
119 Gidn Manchester
120 Peter Randall
121 Benja Stelle
122 Demount & Waterman
123 John Davis
124 George Brown
125 Man Mackimber & Co.
126 Josha Lynley

Endorsed: Origl Owners of Pews—

I

John Brown Com$^{n}$ to Build the Meeting house.
Mess$^{rs}$ John Jenckes
Dan$^{l}$ Cahoon
Eph$^{m}$ Wheaton
Nath$^{l}$ Wheaton
Daniel Tillinghast
Jo$^{s}$ Brown
W$^{m}$ Russell
Edw$^{d}$ Thurber
Nich$^{o}$ Brown
Chris. Sheldon
Benj$^{a}$ Thurber Be Com$^{te}$ to advise and assist in any Matters which he may request, & to meat at each others House in Course as they stand on their list, every Monday Evening, or Oftener if need require.
First Mett at Jn$^{o}$ Browns
May 9. 1774.

Endorsed: Memo$^{dm}$ of Com$^{te}$ to meet at each others abo$^{t}$ the Meeting house.

II

Brother Nich$^{o}$ Brown:
please to Deliver to M$^{r}$ Sumner or James Wheeton one Cask 10$^{d}$ Nails for the meeting house & charge it to s$^{d}$ House.
March $^{4}$ 1775
p Jn$^{o}$ Brown

III

About the Bords
of David Gardner
from Bourn to see
S$^{d}$ Gardners acco$^{t}$ & to
Charge the meeting house

Endorsed: About the Bords of
David Gardner

IV

We the subscribers Promise to Advance
to the Town of Providence and to pay to
the Order of Moses Brown for the use of paving
the Lane or Street Northward of the Baptist
Meeting the sums set against our Names
as fast as the same is Wanted to carry on the
Work this summer in Witness Whereof
we set our hands, the advance we Expect
to Wait on the Town for, Two years on Interest
until repaid—

John Jenckes, Sixty Loads of Paving Stones. £
Moses Brown One hundred Dollars —30.—
Nicho Brown £15 in B & Benson Shop

John Brown to pay in any Goods one half by wholesail
and half by Retail. One Hundred Dollars—

To
John Jenckes
Nicholas Brown, John
Brown, &c—

Endorsed: Subscription for
Paving the Lane
on the North Side
of the Meeting House
1785.

## V

Providence, Sept. 17th. 1791.

Sir.

Being at present greatly pressd for
want of Money & calld on frequently
by the Labourers I employd in
painting the Meeting house—
I am inducd to send you the
Account & earnestly to request some
small sum to satisfy the Debts
which I owe & promisd long
since to discharge.

Yours &c, W$^{m}$ Albertson

The Account amounts to £14.6..0

Mr. Nicholas Brown.

am$^{t}$. of our a/c exclusive of the Tar chg$^{d}$
is £7.18.2
must I deliver him any Cash & howmuch.

Endorsed: Mr. Nicholas Brown
Present

## VI

A List of Number of Pews Names &
Persons anext.....

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| N° 1, 2 | Dan$^{l}$ Tillinghast | £66 |
| 3– | E. Hopkins | 85 |
| 4– | E. Thurber | 85 p$^{d}$ |
| 5– | D Eddy | 85 p$^{d}$ |
| 6– | C Arnold | 82 |
| 7 | Wid Manton | 60 |
| 8– | Jos Olney | 100 p$^{d}$ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9– | Dan[l] Jenckes | 120 |
| 10– | N Brown | 120 |
| 11– | E Bowen | 100 |
| 12– | Arth Fenner | 70 |
| 13– | Sol. Drown | 80 |
| 14– | A Brown | 70 |
| 15– | W[m] Brown | 80 |
| 16– | E. Hopkin | 66 |
| 17– | Jn° Jenckes* | 88 |
| 18– | George Corlis‡ | 110 |
| 19– | Aaron Mason | 75 or 150p[d] |
| 20– | Jos. Sheldon | 150 |
| 21– | N Tilling[st] | 110 |

* George Corliss & Son crossed out
‡ Crossed out

Endorsed: Pews Baptist Meeting house

## Date Due

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